

**Land, Water & Conservation Division
Advisory Committee Minutes
Dennis Building, Room 335
Columbia, South Carolina
Thursday, April 9, 2009**

CONFERENCE CALL

<i>Present</i>	Lynn Youmans Webb Smathers James McLeod Steve Kinard	Bill Simpson Dean Moss – in Columbia Larry Nates Nadim Aziz - proxy
<i>Staff:</i>	Ken Rentiers Barry Beasley Mark Malsick	Steve de Kozlowski Marc Cribb Dorothy Phillips

Call to Order/Welcome: The April 9, 2009, meeting was called to order by Chairman Lynn Youmans at 1:15 p.m. In compliance with the provisions of Section 30-4-80(e) (Freedom of Information Act), notification of this meeting was given to all persons, organizations, local news media, and other news media that requested such notification.

Approval of February 5, 2009 Minutes: A correction was made to the February 5, 2009, minutes by Mr. Simpson. The minutes should read “Mr. Bob Long, Dorchester County Commissioner, Ms. Diane Edwins, Berkeley County Commissioner and Mr. Bill Simpson, Charleston County Commissioner presented Von with a painting as a gift of appreciation for his years of service”. The correction was so noted. Motion was made by Dr. Webb Smathers to approve the corrected February 5, 2009, minutes and seconded by Mr. Dean Moss. The motion passed.

Drought Update: Mark Malsick, Severe Weather Liaison, reviewed the current drought status. Despite several wet weekends, rainfall amounts remain below normal across the State. In the Upstate rainfall is 2”-5” below normal, Midlands 3”- 6” below normal, and 2”-4” below normal along the Coast. A few stations near Beaufort are reporting normal to slightly above normal rainfall amounts.

Lake levels remain below normal but much above last year’s levels. Lake Hartwell is 6 feet below full pool but is projected to rise to near normal levels not seen since April 2007. Lake Jocassee is 18 feet below full pool but has rebounded 5 feet due to the recent rains.

The US Drought Monitor is currently categorizing South Carolina's drought status as Abnormally Dry to Drought-Moderate which are the lowest, least intense categories of drought. The short term, 2 week, precipitation outlook is for above normal rainfall while the long term, 3 month outlook is for normal seasonal rainfall.

The South Carolina Drought Response Committee will meet next week, April 15, to review State-wide drought conditions and make changes to the drought status as required.

Deputy Director's Report: Ken Rentiers reviewed several items for the committee. He started with the Surface Water Withdrawal Permitting bill. The agency has been focusing on minimum flow standards, and the responsibilities that DNR will have.

Ken informed the committee that the State agricultural exemptions to the language on farm ponds have been changed to the satisfaction of the Farm Bureau. Ken attended Georgia Water Planning Meeting in Atlanta, to work on the working relationship with our neighboring states. The division is working on several applications for grant funding including NOAA funding for climatology, several Corp of Engineers opportunities in environmental restoration, and habitat protection projects. USDA has some new funding under the federal stimulus package for flood plain easements. Ken had Barry update the committee on the four applications for properties in the Pee Dee with extensive bottom lands. Ken also informed the committee that additional funding was being sought from FEMA for flood mitigation activities for sea level raise and storm surge. Ken said he is hopeful the agency will be able to bring in more federal dollars.

Ken briefed the committee on the two conservation district meetings he attended. At the Pickens District meeting he swore in Patsy Smith as commissioner and toured some of the projects there. He also attended a meeting with Mr. Simpson in Charleston and they bestowed Mr. William Kennerty with the title of Commissioner Emeritus.

Ken said that he was confident that the division would receive some cuts for next year's budget. He and Steve are working on plans on how to deal with the cuts without losing staff. Ken stated that Mr. Frampton is still committed to trying to avoid any type of RIF or furloughs and he is trying to set priorities and dealing with the cuts without losing staff. Ken stated that the agency was looking at additional cuts for next year between 5 – 8%.

Steve informed the committee that there will be an agency wide participation in a mock hurricane response exercise at the Emergency Operations Center on April 13 in Columbia. The State Climate Office has been issuing fake hurricane warnings to participating staff.

Committee Comments: The committee had further discussions on the water withdrawal permit bill. Mr. McLeod and Barry Beasley spoke about plans for submitting the DNR comments on the Catawba-Wateree Hydro-relicensing Project's Draft Environmental Impact Statement(DEIS). Mr. Beasley informed the committee that there will be an "All Partners Meeting" next week where the DEIS will be discussed, and DNR staff is in the process of putting together comments that will be submitted by the May 8 due date.

Executive Session: At 1:30 p.m., Mr. Youmans motioned to go into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel issues with second by Mr. Moss. All were in favor.

At 1:40 p.m., motion to return to open session, seconded and all were in favor.

Mr. Youmans motioned that re-appointments be approved and seconded by Mr. Larry Nates, all were in favor. The Conservation District Commissioner re-appointments were approved and are as follows: Mr. Bates R. Houck, Calhoun County; Mr. Cleveland C. Hiott, III, Colleton County; Ms. Peggy W. Williams, Georgetown County; Mr. William G. Henderson, Greenwood County; Mr. Ray Crapse, Hampton County and Mr. Thomas A. O'Neal, Jr., Marlboro County.

Mr. Youmans made a motion that the new appointments be approved and seconded by Mr. Steve Kinard, all were in favor. The new appointments were approved and are as follows: Mr. Raymond L. Tumbleston, Charleston County and Mr. John H. Smoak, Charleston County.

Next Meeting Date: July 16, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Bill Simpson and seconded by Mr. Dean Moss. All were in favor to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Dorothy Phillips
Recording Secretary